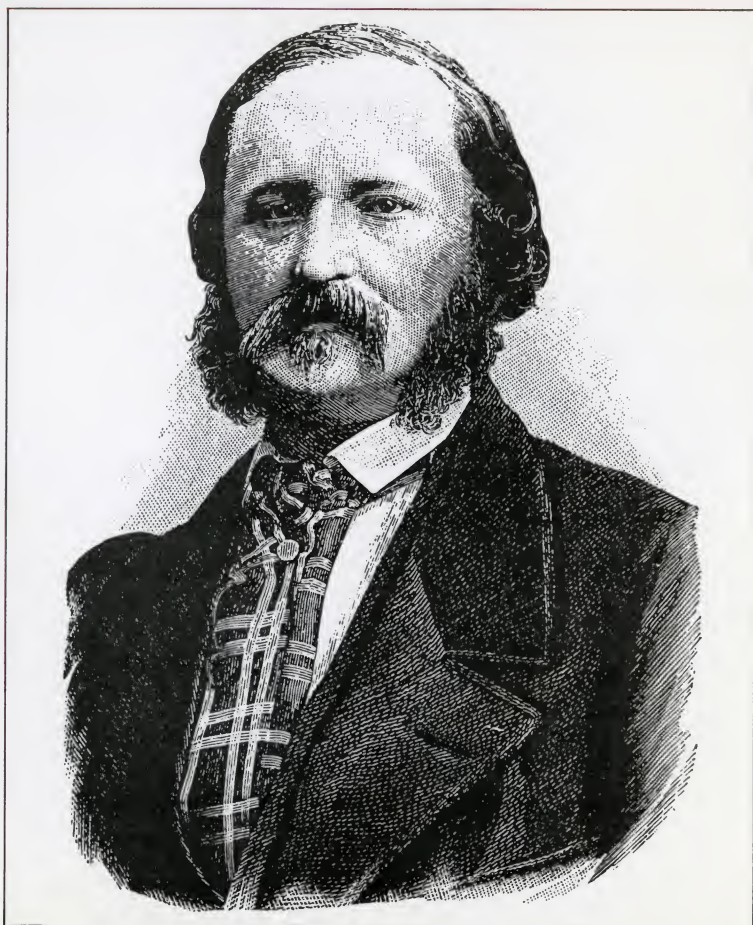


Hillandale

News

No 194 October 1993





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Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Founded in 1919

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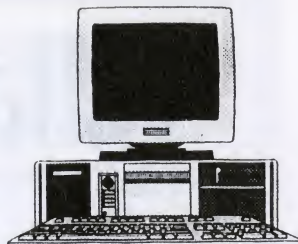
Issue Number 194, October 1993

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Front cover illustration: Edouard Léon Scott de Martinville

EDITOR'S DESK



Twenty-Five Years Old

Readers will have noted from the last issue that this year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Midlands Group of the Society. I would like to take this opportunity of wishing them 'happy anniversary' and all success for the next twenty-five years.

The Society has grown in size and now encompasses members from all parts of the world. I think it is unlikely that when the the Society was founded in 1919 the founding fathers could have envisaged the present status of the Society. With such a geographically diverse membership it is a natural development to set up regional groups and organise local activities. I hope more of these are established as this is one of the most effective ways of 'spreading the gospel' and encouraging more people interested in our hobby to become members. If anyone is interested in starting a new group please let us know as the Committee will be delighted to offer any help and advice to get the new group off the ground. *Hillandale News* is delighted to advertise the activities of regional groups.

While our membership stands at over 700 we are keen to enrol more. The more members we have the more new publications we can add to our booklist; the more of the Society's own publications we can issue and the more improvements we can make to *Hillandale News*. Personal contact is one of the most useful tools we can use to introduce new people to our Society and if you have friends or colleagues interested in joining our Society, please drop a note to the Treasurer for some *Application for Membership Forms*. He is only too willing to oblige!

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the **December** issue will be **15th October 1993**.

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

LÉON SCOTT, THE FATHER OF SOUND RECORDING

by George Taylor

Léon Scott is mentioned in all the books as the inventor of the phonautograph, the first practical machine for recording sound from a variety of sources. Thus, he has some claim to be the father of sound recording, particularly in French circles; recording yes, but reproduction, no. This article is an attempt to describe what Scott set out to do and what he achieved.

Léon Scott de Martinville (1817-1879) was born into a Breton family with Scottish origins. His father had taken up the trade of a printer and young Scott followed into this trade in 1832. He was soon attempting to better his position. He became a printer's corrector and his work on scientific papers in the 1840s gave him some acquaintance among leading French scientists of the day. He also developed an interest in simplified forms of writing (such as shorthand), publishing a history of stenography in 1849. Possibly this led to his interest in developing a direct method of recording sound from speech.

In 1853, he corrected proofs for a book by Longuet, in which the author asked the question, is it not possible to record an impression of what the ear hears? Scott resolved to tackle this problem. He did not seek to reproduce the sound by the means with which he recorded them; on the contrary, his task was to record the sound in a fashion which was amenable to mathematical analysis. In fact, he rather deplored the idea of recording a sound and then conveying it to the ear, rather than allowing the sound to go to the ear directly! So if Scott can be called the father of sound recording, he is not the father of sound reproduction.

The idea of recording sound was by no means new in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1807 Young produced the apparatus capable of recording sound from sources such as tuning forks. A similar device was invented by Duhamel and further developed by Wertheim, and among other things, it could record the vibration of strings. All these devices depended on contact between a recording stylus and the body emitting the sound. Scott's idea was to record sound waves from general sources where such contact was not possible, such as the voice.

Scott started work in 1854 and on 26th January 1857 he deposited a sealed statement with the Academy of Sciences describing his aims and summarising his experimental work; the deposition of such statements was a usual French procedure to establish priority, Charles Cros doing the same thing with regard to sound recording and reproduction in 1877. In his deposition Scott described his first apparatus. He was no mechanic and this had been constructed by an instrument engineer called Froment. Scott filed a patent for the apparatus (no. 31,470, 25th March 1857). The idea was to reproduce the human auditory system. Sound was collected in a trumpet-shaped horn. Across the narrow end of the horn was stretched a thin membrane 'about the size of a five-franc piece'. Behind this was a second membrane and thus the two membranes enclosed a sealed air space. The tensions of both membranes could be adjusted by means of annular bands. At the centre of the second membrane was fixed a wild boar's bristle by means of wax. This

was rested lightly on a flat glass plate coated with soot. The plate rested on a lubricated surface and could be pushed rapidly from side to side. The machine was operated by making a noise in front of the horn while moving the plate laterally at about one metre per second. It can be seen that even though the style bristle was mounted as in a hill-and-dale recorder, sticking directly out of the centre of the diaphragm, it would be compliant enough to allow a lateral-motion waveform to be drawn as the smoked plate moved transversely, as long as the bristle touched the plate at an acute angle.

At a meeting of the Academy on 6th January 1858, the noted French physicist Jules Lissajous (1822-1880) commented on Scott's work to date. Lissajous showed a remarkable prescience of the practical as-

pects of sound recording by the acoustic method. He said that the problem was to relate the recorded traces to the sounds that had produced them. The fidelity of the recording was degraded by resonances and dampening effects in the horn, limitations in the vibrations of the diaphragm and in the movements of the recording bristle. All these sources of distortion do not apply to the ear, largely because its dimensions are so small relative to the wavelengths of the sounds. In other words, the phonautograph in its then state of development was incapable of accurately recording a true representation of what the ear hears. Lissajous ended on a rather more encouraging note, saying that though Scott's apparatus was not capable of answering certain acoustical questions, it would be valuable to science in other respects of sound analysis.

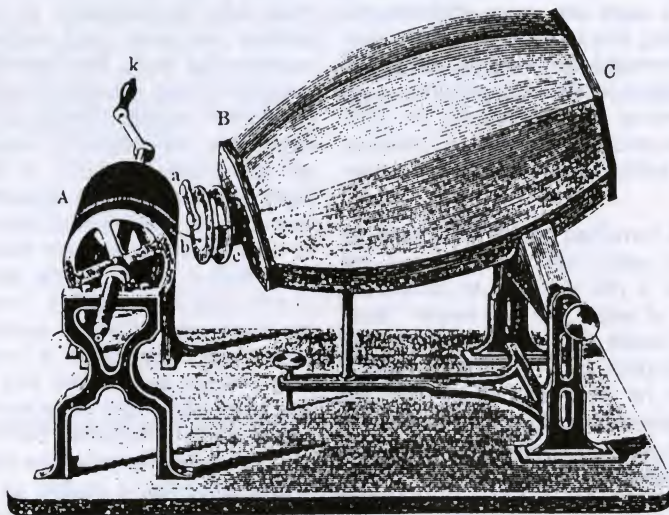


Fig. 1: Koenig Mark 1

These rather discouraging observations led Scott to think rather more deeply about the design of the machine. A major weak point was the lack of a lever system which would allow the bristle to record a true lateral waveform on the smoked glass; the existing simple direct system was a poor compromise. Scott decided that more sophisticated equipment was necessary and, negotiations with Froment having come to nothing, he approached the noted instrument maker Rudolph Koenig, signing a contract with him on 30th April 1859. In this, Scott recognised that he was only an amateur, and in effect, he handed over further development and exploitation of the phonautograph to Koenig. Koenig's initial improvements were the subject of an addition of 29th July 1859 to Scott's 1857 patent application.

Koenig's first model (Fig. 1) was a rationalisation of the early Scott/Froment machine. Only a single diaphragm was used and recording took place on a revolving cylinder covered with smoked paper. The horn was a remarkable affair. About one metre long, in side view it was in the form of an ellipse. The mouth of the horn was at one focus and the diaphragm passed through the focus at the other end of the horn. I suppose this curious-shaped horn was an attempt to counter some of Lissajous's criticisms. The recording bristle seems to have been mounted just as in the Scott/Froment machine, with all the consequent vibrational limitations, which would be even more pronounced when the surface of a cylinder was substituted for the flat plate, the engraving of this Koenig Mark 1 may be inaccurate in this respect, perhaps?

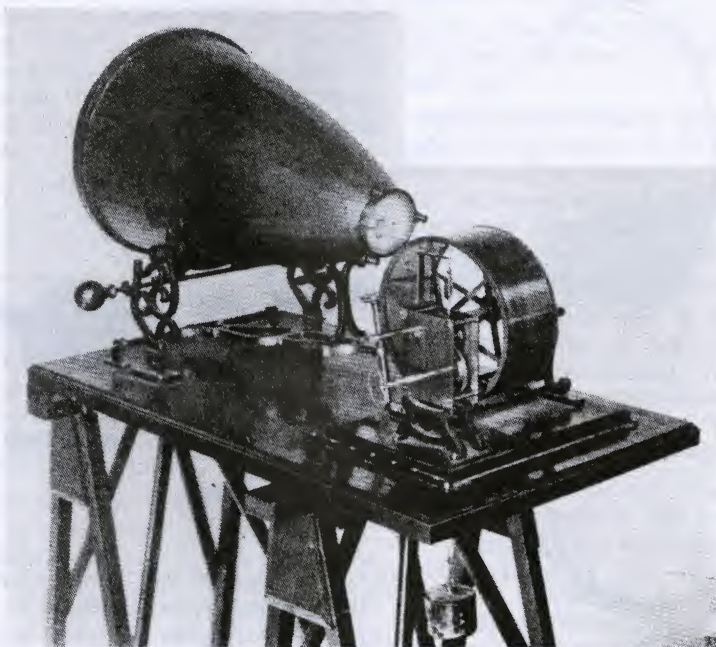


Fig. 2: Koenig Mark 2 (from Cain)

This initial model was rapidly followed by further developments. The clumsy ellipsoidal horn was replaced by a parabolic horn with the diaphragm at the focus; sound waves were supposed to be reflected onto the diaphragm. Then a weight-driven motor drive was added. During 1862, Koenig filed a long series of patent applications for these developments.

Did these later models have a lever system allowing a true lateral vibration to the recording stylus? The picture of the weight-driven machine in John Cain's book (Fig. 2) is the clearest I have seen and a lever system **could** be present; certainly, on the following page Cain sketches a practical lever system but merely calls his sketch "one possible arrangement" (Fig 3).

Koenig phonautographs were to be found in many European scientific centres and also in the New World - a picture of a Mark 2 machine (parabolic horn, hand cranked) in the Smithsonian Institute is given in Read and Welch's book. Nevertheless, success was limited.

Scott, still the amateur and still trying to perfect his invention, returned to his first twin diaphragm system; but this time, he simulated the human ear by mirroring the small bones of the auditory tract with ivory facsimiles forming the link between his two membranes. Perhaps he had been in the business too long.....

Koenig continued his researches and on 27th October 1864, he presented his results

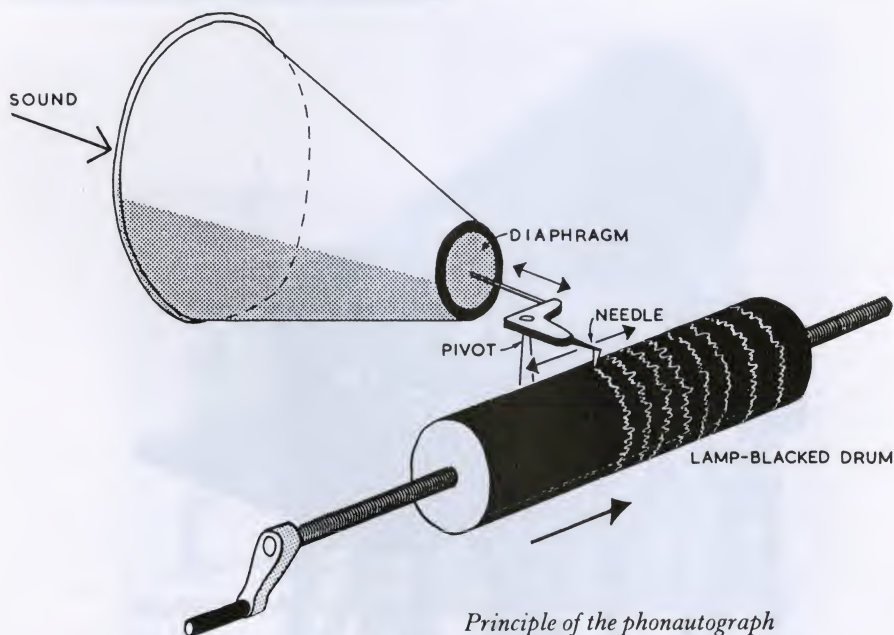


Fig. 3: "One possible arrangement" (Cain sketch)

to a meeting of the Conservatory of Arts and Sciences. He showed his traces from a number of different sound sources and had even recorded the folk tune made famous by Mozart's use of it, and Adam's variations, "Ah, vous direz-je, maman" - surely the first classical vocal recording!

In later years, Scott turned away from acoustical research. But when Edison's first phonograph came to his attention in March 1878, he claimed that the American had stolen his invention - forgetting that he had never aimed to **reproduce** sound, only to record it. He died a year later, not having sought honour or riches - only recognition. Certainly no riches - but recognition, yes.

References

Most of this information came from the book *La Machine Parlante*, by Paul Charbon (1981). Other sources include Read and Welch's *From Tinfoil to Stereo* (1959) and John Cain's *Talking Machines* (1961). There is an interesting history of acoustical research in the nineteenth century in a paper by J. G. M'Kendrick in the journal *Nature* No.1678, Vol.65, 26th December 1901, pp 182-189, replete with illustrations of all sorts of amusing machines.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Science Museum Library for a photostat of the relevant chapter from Charbon's book and to Paul Cleary for digging out material from the British Library.

C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

Item B 50 *HMV 1930 Instrument and Accessories Catalogue* has been reprinted and is now available price **£6** incl. U.K. postage.

Item B 210 *Hayes on Record* - The story of the manufacture of records & tapes at E.M.I.'s Hayes Factory edited by Peter Hall and Colin Brown. Paperback with over 200 pages and many illustrations is now available price **£8** incl. U.K. postage.

Item B 211 *World Records, Vocalion W, Fetherflex and Penny Phono Recordings* A Listing by Frank Andrews, Arthur Badrock and Edward S. Walker is now available price **£4** incl. U.K. postage.

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THE EXHIBITION SOUND-BOX

THE ULTIMATE SOUND

by Jim Goodall

Not long ago, I had an HMV Exhibition sound-box sent to me for repair. I found half the back-plate was missing and one of the retention springs at the base of the sound-box was broken - a truly sorry sight. Fortunately, I had a spare back-plate from an old sound-box I had bought for experimental purposes years previously. With the passage of time this had been cannibalised to provide parts for other repair jobs. This Unola sound-box had been made in Switzerland and was of a similar design to the HMV Exhibition. Its back-plate fitted exactly to the Exhibition I had to hand. Unfortunately I had no spare retention springs or other suitable pieces of metal which could be substituted. Those springs of the Unola had been used up long ago.

Enquiries at various manufacturers revealed that no *Exhibition* type retention springs were available and on asking the same firms about manufacturing to special order, in each case the answer was the same, that without setting up special tooling at a cost of several hundred pounds they would be unable to oblige.

I was unwilling to admit that I was stumped and unable to complete a repair job because of the unavailability of a tiny bit of metal! Suddenly I remembered I had a collection of governor springs which I had never used. Could I fashion a retention spring from one of them? A governor spring is of reasonable width and has a hole at each end large enough for one of the screws at the base of an *Exhibition* sound-box to pass through. Although a governor spring is too thin and therefore too pliable I thought that building a leaf spring out of

three or four governor springs might well fill the bill. After all many motor vehicles are supported on laminated springs.

The *Exhibition* was a sturdy little sound-box which was widely used during the early 1900s when disc records were a comparatively new development in the history of recorded sound. At the time when the *Exhibition* was in general use, recording was done by a mechanical process and good reproduction was only possible by performers placing themselves close to the mouth of a large horn with a diaphragm connected to a recording stylus at the far end. Vocalists recorded best of all with pianos coming out a poor second, sounding rather distant. Brass bands came over well but orchestras were not so good due to the horn being unable to capture the full range of their sound. When electrical recording was introduced, the wider dynamic range of orchestras and church organs recorded were beyond the scope of the *Exhibition* sound-box. Their mica diaphragms were too thick for their small size and the retention springs at the base were too stiff to allow full play for the diaphragm with the result that the bass register was restricted and the tone too shrill and high pitched. Any attempt to use an *Exhibition* sound-box on a heavily recorded orchestral record would result in the needle jumping about in the groove instead of following the sound track smoothly.

I will now explain how to improve the *Exhibition* sound-box to reproduce electrically recorded records.

- 1) Unscrew the three screws at the back of

the sound-box and remove the back-plate; then with a fine screwdriver, unscrew the grub screw that fastens the top of the stylus bar to the centre of the mica diaphragm and detach the stylus from the wax seal. Next remove the top rubber gasket (which is probably rotten with age) then remove the diaphragm (which as likely as not will be cracked) and then remove the remaining gasket. The grub screw securing the diaphragm is so small that it could easily fall on the floor and get lost; so place this in a receptacle and keep it in a safe place.

2) The next step is to slacken the nuts round the two stanchion screws at the base of the now empty frame so that these two screws can be removed thus completely releasing the stylus unit from the two knife-edged fulcrums against which it was held by the tiny retaining springs attached to the underside of the stylus platform. Now remove the nuts from the two stanchions.

3) Select four very thin and whippy governor springs, making sure that the holes at either end of each spring are large enough for one of the stanchions to pass through. Take a pair of pliers and break off $\frac{3}{10}$ inch from the two ends of each governor spring. This will provide eight pieces of spring each with a hole at one end. Take four of these and slip them over one of the stanchions so, that when the nut is screwed back on, these will form a 4-ply leaf spring when arranged to lie in one direction. Do the same to the other stanchion and tighten the nuts on both of them so that the four components of each leaf spring are held firmly together pointing in the same direction. Now remove the old restraining springs from under the stylus platform and hold the stylus unit on to its knife-edged seating while screwing both stanchions back into position so that the leaf springs will overlap and press **down** onto the upper side of the stylus platform, thus holding it firmly onto the knife-edged fulcrum. Adjust the screws to balance the stylus.

4) Having got thus far, we need a pair of gasket rings to support the diaphragm. One of the best and most effective types of gasket to use is transparent polythene surgical tubing. One of the best-known manufacturers of this material is Baird and Tatlock who make it in various widths from capillary upwards. For use in average sound-boxes including the *Exhibition* types, the width of tubing required is 3mm external diameter. Cut two lengths of this tubing so that they will fit snugly round the inside of the shell or frame of the sound-box. There should be no gaps or slackness in the gasket rings when fitted. Should there be the slightest air gap remaining after the back-plate has been screwed right down and the stylus to diaphragm joint sealed this will cause a distorted tone and probably a buzzing or chattering sound caused by the vibration of the loose edges of the diaphragm. To test, lightly tap the needle end of the stylus with the knuckle and if all is OK, a pure muffled tapping sound will be heard, but if a faint 'click' accompanies the taps, the diaphragm and gaskets will have to be removed and a carefully cut ring of thin card (3mm wide) measuring just over 43mm. outside diameter inserted so that it fits exactly into the sound-box frame. This should close any remaining air gaps when the sound-box is re-assembled.

5) The *Exhibition* sound-box takes a mica diaphragm 43mm in diameter and the one I used was thinner than most. I could tell it was thinner than usual by the comparatively low note it emitted when flicked in the air with a finger and allowed to fall onto a soft surface. The pitch of its ring would be around the middle G on the piano. In the event that a sufficiently thin diaphragm is not available it is possible to scale a thick diaphragm down by applying a razor blade edge on to the side of the diaphragm. Gentle pressure will drive the blade between the thin layers of mica. As the layers become separated insert a broader blade (such as that of a kitchen knife) **before**

withdrawing the razor blade. Finally slice through the diaphragm as if slicing a loaf of bread. If this is successful one should end up with two diaphragms (one paper thin and the other now reduced to the required thickness). The success of this operation depends on the accuracy with which the razor blade has been inserted. At best it is a tricky hit-or-miss affair as, either the unwanted layer may not peel off cleanly, or one ends up with two diaphragms both of which are too thin. If one has a micrometer handy, the diaphragms should be around six-thousandths of an inch thick and certainly not more than seven-thousandths of an inch thick.

6) Now we shall assemble the sound-box. We already have the stylus unit in place with the hole in the tip of the stylus in dead-centre of the frame. Now lay the first or lower gasket ring of polythene tubing into the frame so that it fits snugly round the inside of the front rim. Next place the diaphragm on top of the gasket ring and its centre hole should come exactly over the hole in the end of the stylus bar and the edges of the diaphragm should give even clearance of the frame all round its perimeter. Next adjust the stanchion screws holding the leaf springs and the stylus unit in place until the tip of the stylus bar comes within a hair's breadth of the diaphragm. Now coax the grub screw so that it falls into the hole in the diaphragm and then with one finger held beneath the stylus bar to steady it, use a fine-edged screw-driver, turn the screw just enough to connect with the stylus bar and hold it. Now coax the top gasket ring in place and screw down the back-plate. Through the sleeve of the back-plate, one can easily reach the grub screw and with a fine screw-driver give the screw a turn or more but leaving it still loose. Next tap the needle end of the stylus **very lightly** with the knuckle, first on one side then the other, adjusting the two stanchion screws until a faint click is heard (whichever side of

the stylus is tapped). This ensures that both the stylus and diaphragm are exactly in the neutral position. If this test does not work, remove the back-plate and try to shift the diaphragm so that, as far as possible, the sides of the hole in the diaphragm are clear of the screw passing it through it; then repeat the test. Once completed, screw home the grub screw until it only **just begins** to grip the diaphragm (i.e. the head of the screw is only just in contact with the mica). Do not screw up tight as this is liable to crack or otherwise damage the diaphragm (as seen in many of the sound-boxes submitted to me for repair). Finally comes the last stage as the sound-box is ready to be sealed.

7) To seal the sound-box, take a candle of good quality wax and light it. Next take a 1.5mm to 2.0mm miniature screw-driver and dip the end at the top of the candle so as to gather up a drop of the molten wax. Hold the end of the screw-driver in the flame for 2 seconds and holding the sound-box face upwards lay the still molten wax around the head of the stylus bar where it joins the diaphragm. You may need to do this one, two or three times. Finally lay the sound-box down face up and hold a lighted match touching the stylus bar just above the bend. Watch the wax carefully, for the heat will travel along the metal and start melting the wax. As soon as the wax begins to melt draw the match away and the wax should then solidify into a neat round seal about the end of the stylus bar thus sealing its joint to the diaphragm. The sound-box is now ready for service and should give a superb performance. I have never heard a sound-box like it!

From what seemed to be a completely hopeless write-off a sound-box has been refurbished, as described above, to produce amazing results. The frequency range extends from the crystal clear definition of the very highest notes to a splendid depth of bass response. This is demonstrated in

Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Promenade Orchestra's performance of Liszt's *La Campanella*. To me the whole tonal balance and quality of reproduction is both natural and very pleasing. If the diaphragm had been thicker the top notes would have been accentuated and too shrill for comfort; the bass would response would have been diminished and damage may well have been done to the loudly recorded grooves. Furthermore the sound-box was capable of playing the loudest records right to the very centre of the disc without the slightest sign of tracking error. In addition there was an absence of any buzzing or rattle from the integral parts of the sound-box itself. This chatter is a common fault found in cheap constructed sound-boxes.

I do not understand why this 'doctored' *Exhibition* sound-box should have worked so efficiently and effectively. I can only put it down to the fact that the diaphragm was just about the right thickness and that the two laminated recovery springs offered the right degree of compliance coupled with the correct degree of elasticity to enable the needle to follow and ride the sound track with perfect smoothness without ricocheting from side to side in the groove. I would recommend any mechanically minded enthusiasts to try this experiment out for himself. As long as the thickness of the diaphragm is right its size does not affect the quality of reproduction.

C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

- B 131** *The Edison Disc Phonograph and Diamond Disc*
by George Frow. An excellent illustrated history **£15.00**
- B 205** *Memories of A. F. Wagner, Edison's British Manager.*
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- B 212** *O Lovely Knight - A biography of Sir Landon Ronald*
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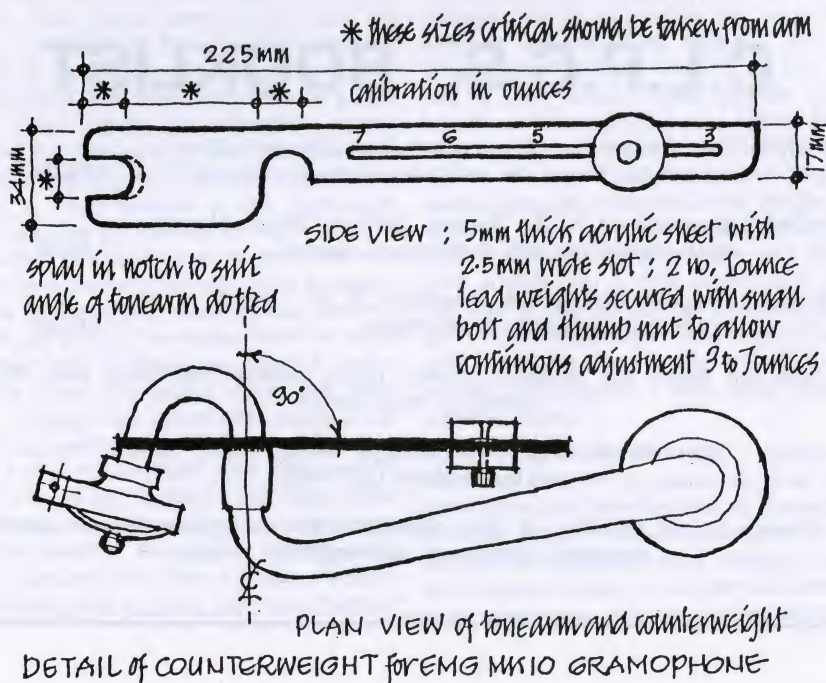
COUNTERWEIGHT FOR THE EMG MARK X GRAMOPHONE

by William McKnight Toner

As the owner of a similar machine I was particularly interested to read in issue 191 of *Hillandale News* of Mr Mallinson's restoration of an EMG Mark X Gramophone. Mr Mallinson made reference to his having fitted a counterweight to reduce the original playing weight of 8 ounces to some 6 ounces but he did not elaborate on what form this counterweight takes.

Some time ago I decided to experiment with a view to reducing needle wear, hoping to conserve my small stock of original Davey Three Star Fibres (Price Two Shillings and Elevenpence for Twenty-Four) and came up

with a gadget which works admirably and requires no modification to the machine. Despite its simplicity it is by no means easy to describe in words hence the need for the small sketch. I recently refined it slightly by marginally increasing the dimensions of the semicircular slots to enable these to be lined with scraps of "ConTact" self adhesive film with a flock finish which makes for a very snug fit and avoids the possibility of damage to the plating on the tone-arm. Tilting the device up at the rear enables it to be fitted or removed in a moment and it is easy to continuously vary the playing weight



between three and seven ounces. With a well-tuned sound-box I find most records can be played without audible distortion at three ounces although heavily recorded or worn discs require around six ounces for secure tracking.

Though intended primarily to reduce playing weight, the use of this type of counterweight should, in theory, improve the accuracy of transferring information from the record groove to the diaphragm, provided that the tone-arm bearings are well adjusted and lubricated to accommodate the increased mass now applied to the tone-arm. Some records certainly appear to sound cleaner particularly in loud passages. Whether this is due to the decrease in playing weight, the additional mass of the tone-arm or a combination of both is difficult to say and an element of wishful thinking cannot be ruled out.

It is of course necessary to remove the counterweight before returning the arm to its parking pedestal and when fitted the soundbox cannot be swung through 180 degrees for needle or record changing. I

personally find this no problem as I normally allow the soundbox to remain needle-point down when changing both needles and records as a stop in the vertical bearing prevents the needle fouling the motorboard, and with the turntable dynamically levelled to minimise sidethrust the tone-arm swings naturally to the right where it is restrained by the lid stay, which happens to be on the right hand side on my machine.

I very much doubt if this idea is particularly original and I am probably guilty of re-invention but I can't recall having seen anything similar in over fifty years addiction to the gramophone and most attempts to reduce playing weight seem to have involved the use of springs and/or modifications to the machine. Unfortunately of the number of gramophones I possess only the configuration of the tone-arm on the EMG lends itself so easily to the use of such a simple counterweight.

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MORE PERSONALITIES BEHIND THE NAMES ON THE LABELS - Part 4

by Frank Andrews

No.20 Lina Cavalieri (soprano)

was born in Rome, Italy and began her musical career as a singer in "Café Concerts" but then gradually gravitated towards the "Lyric Stage" productions and began studying with Madame Mariani Masi.

She arrived in Lisbon, Portugal in 1900 where she made her operatic début as Nedda in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*. Other operatic performances followed with the San Carlo Opera, Naples and the Imperial Theatre, Warsaw. In 1905 she performed in the open-air theatre at Béziers - later appearing in London at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and other London houses which staged operas. Later she went to the U.S.A. Cavalieri appears to have been issued on just one Columbia Grand Opera Record (12") in the U.K.

No. 21 Wladimir Cernikoff (pianoforte)

Cernikoff was born in May 1882 in Paris and was educated there at the University, but his musical studies took place in Geneva, Malta and Berlin. His concert début was in a performance of a Mozart concerto, in October 1905, at a concert in Mülhausen, Germany. His only U.K. recordings were on Columbia-Rena Records.

His first appearance in London took place in February 1908. He subsequently took up residence there. He had other activities in cycling and playing tennis. He died in London in 1948.

No.22 Lloyd Chandos (tenor)

His musical education took place at the Guildhall School of Music in London under Sir Isodor de Solla for voice training and under Sir Henry Wood, who was then conductor of The Queen's Hall Orchestra, for oratorio and opera.

Whilst still a Guildhall student he was selected to sing the rôle of Romeo in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and he also sang in Bizet's *Carmen* and Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*.

He was presented with a Worshipful Company of Musicians medal by Sir John Stainer, the composer of *The Crucifixion* and other works.

He won the first prize, a grand pianoforte, at the first Musical Trade Exhibition's competition for tenor voice and received a diploma from Madame Patti.

As a result of singing in a performance of Handel's *Messiah* with the Royal Albert Hall Choral Society he was contracted for six more concerts to be given the following year. He was always associated with the R.A.H. Choral Society thereafter.

He subsequently sang with the more celebrated choral societies throughout Britain and was engaged for the South Africa Musical Festivals of 1907, 1909 and 1912.

In concert work he had been conducted by many of the best and leading conductors of the time up to the end of 1914. They included Sir Joseph Barnby, Dr W. H. Cummings, Sir Edward Elgar, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Augustus Manns, Dr Hans

Richter, Mr Coleridge-Taylor, Sir Frederick Bridge, Sir Frederick Cowen, Monsieur Lamoureux, Herr Felix Mottl, Sir Hubert Parry, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, Mr George Riseley and Sir Henry Wood.

No.23 Tom Clare (entertainer)

Tom was born into a musical family and began playing the cornet at the age of eight years, in public, as a member of the Mohawk Minstrel Troupe, with whom his father had been associated for many years. He was also a choirboy at the Italian Church in Hatton Garden, London and at the Pro-Cathedral, Kensington and a boy soloist with the Brompton Oratory Choir, also in Kensington. He also took part in concerts at the Wellington Barracks but in what capacity, cornet or vocal, I know not. Later, he joined a juvenile opera company but then went solo with musical sketches. As a professional entertainer Tom Clare sang ballads, gave humorous recitations, accompanied himself at the piano and he composed some of the items he recorded. By mid-1914 he had a repertoire of fifteen sketches and, at least, fifty different songs. He recorded on Sterling Gold Moulded Cylinders and His Master's Voice discs.

No.24 E. Gordon Cleather (tenor)

This singer was born in November 1872 in Cagliari on the Isle of Sicily. His father was Gabriel Gordon Cleather, a foremost timpanist of his day, who had trained for three years under J. A. Smith, of the Crystal Palace Symphony Orchestra. He had then played with prominent London orchestras and in America. He later became manager at the Crystal Palace and was appointed Professor of Timpani at the Guildhall School of Music.

His son was educated at Radley College, Oxfordshire and went on to the Royal

College of Music in London. In 1892 he made his début at a Crystal Palace Concert in which he sang Schubert's *Der Erlkönig* with words by Goethe. His development, however, was that of an actor/singer. He became well-known as a participant in the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts held in the Queen's Hall, London, at ballad concerts, the Crystal Palace Symphony Concerts and other important concerts in London and Birmingham.

In stage work he successfully appeared in musical productions at Daly's Theatre, the Apollo Theatre, the Prince of Wales Theatre and the London Coliseum. Two of his best known acting and singing rôles were in Donizetti's *La Favorita* and Messenger's *Véronique*.

He was appointed Professor of Singing at the Guildhall School of Music in 1914.

His only known recordings were on Favorite Records, although there is a faint possibility that the masters were in the stencilled labels John Bull Record, Lyric Record, Philharmonic Record and Perophone Records (for overseas customers).

No.25 Sidney Coltham (tenor)

Mr Coltham was born in Canterbury, Kent in October 1888 and was educated in the Canterbury Cathedral Choir School. He was under the tutelage of Dr Longhurst and Dr Perrin at the school. He then took another tutor on London, a Mr Winsloe Hall, in preparing for a career in music.

His first job, however, was as a schoolmaster but he made his début as a singer in a performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in Canterbury Cathedral in 1908. His first London appearance took place the following year.

He then sang at many provincial festivals at Hereford, Birmingham etc. and with the Royal Choral Society as soloist. He had the

unusual hobby of breeding pigeons for show.

Coltham recorded for Zonophone Twin Record, Zonophone Record, His Master's Voice, Piccadilly, Piccadilly Celebrity and can also be found on Ariel Grand Record and Octacros.

No.26 Horatio Connell (baritone)

This artist was born in February 1876. He studied singing with Emil Gastel in Philadelphia, U.S.A. Later Madame Johanna Gadski, soprano, advised him to study with Professor Julius Stockhausen (who died in 1906) in Frankfurt, Germany.

He made his début in Germany and before a year had passed he was considered, by many critics, to be the finest lieder singer in Germany at that time.

After he came and settled in London he became one of Britain's leading oratorio and concert singers.

He returned to America and sang with great success with the New York Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Oratorio Society, the New York Liederkranz etc. Recital work was undertaken at Harvard, Princeton and other universities and colleges in the U.S.A. and he appeared at the well-known Worcester and Bach Festivals with the Mendelssohn Choir of Toronto Festivals - and many others. His recordings in the U.K. are found on Columbia cylinders and discs and on Gramophone Concert Records.

No.27 Charles Copland (baritone)

Born at Brightlingsea, Essex, Copland's preparation for a musical career began at the Royal Academy of Music under F. Walker and then he became a pupil of Eugene Oudin. He also took some overseas studies.

His début in London was at a Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Promenade Concert. He sang with the Royal Choral Society in the Royal Albert Hall and in the London Ballad Concerts at the Queen's Hall and in the Mottl/Wagner Concerts at the Crystal Palace. He also sang with the Philharmonic Societies and similar organisations in Liverpool, Bradford, Huddersfield, Glasgow and Highbury in London.

In 1891 he created the rôle of Isaac of York in Sir Arthur Sullivan's *Ivanhoe* at the Royal English Opera House (later re-named the Palace Theatre of Varieties) and, in the same year, created Roland in Messenger's *La Basoche*. In 1894 he sang the only male rôle in *Hansel and Gretel* by Humperdinck. He toured with Mesdames Albani and Ella Russell (the Countess di Righini) and frequently with Clara Butt.

He sang before their majesties King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra and before King George V and Queen Mary when they were still Prince and Princess of Wales.

He was already a Professor of Singing at the Royal Academy of Music in 1907 and also taught singing at Trinity College of Music, London.

Having studied elocution under Walter Lacey and J. Milland he achieved considerable success as a reciter of poems and prose at soirées and in private circles.

Copland's recordings can be found on the Gramophone Record, Gramophone Concert and Gramophone Monarch labels, Odeon Record, Edison Bell Disc, Columbia, Rena and the stencil label Millophone New Record.

No.28 Madame Ghita Corri (soprano)

Madame Corri was born in Edinburgh, the daughter of Henry Corri, a leading baritone at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

and the founder of the Corri Opera Company, which toured the provinces before the Carl Rosa Opera Company and similar companies did so.

She was educated privately and prepared for a musical career both with her parents' opera company and on the continent of Europe. She married the author Richard Neville Lynn.

Her first public appearance in London was at a Crystal Palace Concert, when she was only 17 years of age, as an operatic and ballad vocalist. She later joined the Carl Rosa Opera Company and appeared as Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust* in April 1899.

She appeared, or toured, with such artists as Sir Charles Hallé; Signor Foli (John McCormack); Joseph Joachim, the violinist; Joseph Hollman, the 'cellist; Nathalie Janotha, the pianist; and so forth. Once at a Crystal Palace Concert, Paderewski was her accompanist where she sang *Let the Bright Seraphim* from Handel's oratorio *Samson*.

During the Coronation Week of 1902 (when King Edward VII was crowned) Madame Corri was specially engaged by Charles Morton (The Father of the Music Hall) to sing her own composition *Coronation* at the Palace Theatre of Varieties in London.

A successful concert tour through France and Spain was undertaken during 1908.

She composed many songs, four of which were *The Land of Light, Love Dreams, Say Yes and Have Faith*. Her repertoire included thirty-five operas and she had the ability to sing in English, French, German and Italian.

Besides composing for voice and piano, she was also accomplished in etching and painting. She recorded for Lucock & Packman's Pioneer Cylinders, Pathé Cylinders, Nicole Records, single-sided Zonophone Records and Columbia Phonograph Co. Gen'l discs.

No.28 Ada Crossley (contralto)

This artist was born in Tarraville, South Grippoland in the state of Victoria, Australia. Her parents were Edward Wills Crossley and his wife Henrietta, who was a member of the poet Cowper's family.

She began her musical studies in Melbourne under Fanny Simonsen for singing and under Signor Zelman for pianoforte and harmony. Her first public appearance was during a Melbourne Philharmonic Society Concert in 1892. She sang frequently in Melbourne throughout that year, created a fine impression and enhanced her reputation.

In 1894 she sailed for Europe and became a pupil of Madame Mathilde Marchesi, who lived in Paris at that time. For training in oratorio she had tuition from Sir Charles Santley in England.

Her London début took place in 1895 at a concert in the Queen's Hall, after which she went on to appear at all the great music festivals within the British Empire. She gave five Royal Command performances before Queen Victoria within the space of two years. Tours of South Africa and the United States of America were followed by a triumphal tour when she returned to Australia.

She rode horses and drove motor cars. Ada Crossley recorded for Pathé and both cylinders and discs were issued. She also recorded 10" discs for Victor and although three sides were allocated Gramophone Concert Record numbers it is open to question whether they were issued anywhere.

To be continued.

THE 1993 ARSC CONFERENCE (A Personal Retrospect)

by Joe Pengelly

The Bismarck Hotel in the heart of Chicago was the venue, from 12th to 15th May, for the twenty-seventh Annual Conference of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections. Buffs from the USA, Canada and Europe gathered to enjoy a veritable cornucopia of audio-material ranging from the stuff of the music halls to the most esoteric of operas. As ever, though, there was much original research to be enjoyed not only from the formal sessions but perhaps even more so from the informal get-togethers afterwards.

A session that combined such formal presentations with participation from a very knowledgeable audience and chaired by Steve Smolian addressed itself to all aspects of the cylinder medium - *How to Clean and Store Them, How We Can Repair Them* and so on and so on. It was, perhaps, disappointing that Eliot Levin and his new Symposium electrical cylinder replay machine were both absent from the session but good to know that orders for the machine have been encouraging and that at an advertised price of not more than £500 an up-to-date cylinder replay machine will be generally available.

Seth Winner of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives and Jack Raymond's offering of original cast recordings 1890-1920 was an object lesson in the retrieval of acceptable archive sound. At last British buffs will be glad to know that our American cousins are no longer expunging anything over 1500Hz so as to avoid surface noise at any cost.

Barry Ashpole's and Colin Bain's paper on *Beniamino Gigli: Italian Patriot or Fascist Sympathiser?* revealed the predicament some artists found themselves in during the last war. While Gigli could perhaps have refused to sing for Hitler he certainly didn't deserve the subsequent criminal persecution to which he was subjected. This ended in the death of his persecutor in a police shoot out!

Dr David Pickett, a Briton and Director of Recording Arts at the Indiana University School of Music, confirmed that rare amalgam of musician and recording engineer in the one man. He revealed that if some recording engineers can be "creative" some conductors and composers are not above altering the compositions of orchestras and even scores for particular halls.

It was refreshing to have a contribution from Harry Bradshaw of RTE Radio in Dublin with a presentation on an émigré Irishman - Captain Francis O'Neill - who ninety years ago became Chief of Police in Chicago and who with his Edison cylinder machine extensively recorded the Irish pipe music of the City. Harry capped his splendid presentation with a live performance of the Irish pipes by a veteran who had known the subject of his paper and proving that live performance sound still has a future!

Chuck Haddix of the University of Missouri, and again a professional broadcaster, highlighted the power of music as used in radio, film and television. He featured the music of Leith Stevens who so significantly scored

such films as *The Wild One* starring Marlon Brando.

Studs Terkel, who with his oral history recordings and their rendering in book form brought him a Pulitzer Prize, addressed a capacity audience and demonstrated his unique ability to "listen creatively".

David Hall, very much a founding father of ARSC and so much else, recalled his association with the Living Presence Mercury recordings of the early fifties, using one microphone only with the balance and dynamics left in the hands of the conductor and not in the hands of the engineer. Food for thought there, certainly.

The 1993 ARSC Lifetime Achievement Award went to with universal acclamation to Professor Ray Wile for his outstanding scholarship on Edison over many years.

For me this was the best ARSC Conference I have so far attended and due in no small measure to Brenda Nelson-Strauss of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra who, with her helpers, regulated the sessions to such good effect that only two speakers managed to evade her closure motions.

Next year's ARSC Conference will be held in New York. Why not come along - the language presents no real difficulty.

Forthcoming Meetings in London

London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at **6.45pm** (unless stated otherwise). Members' attention is drawn to the London Meetings Notice on page 100 of issue 188 (October 1992).

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| October 21st | John Cowley will be talking about and identifying the rôle of migrant musicians in the evolution of the recording industry in the United Kingdom |
| November 18th | <i>Odds & Ends</i> - Andy Newman gives an amateur's view of musicians and music |
| December 16th | <i>Members Night</i> - Bring your own favourites to share with others |
| January 20th 1994 | <i>Follow the Dog</i> - Ruth Edge, Archivist with EMI Music Ltd. at Hayes, reveals some of the treasures she is responsible for |
| February 18th | Ruth Lambert (Title to be announced) |
| March 18th | Chris Hamilton (Title to be announced) |

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IN SEARCH OF JULES LEVY

by L. E. Andersen

Jules Levy, 'Caruso of the Cornet', born in London in 1838, was a master of the 19th century cornet technique, likely the greatest ever recorded, and a master showman as well; but his career barely overlapped that of the phonograph. Most of his surviving records thus date from just before his death in Chicago in 1903 hence they portray an artist still great but well past his prime.

So far, that period has been represented only by his 7" and 10" Victor discs of 1901-03^{7,9} plus a precious few 12" and 14" ^{7,9,10} and but five 10" Columbia's of circa 1902.¹¹ One hears rumours of earlier Levy Berliners, but if they do exist their musical value is questionable despite historical importance.

That leaves his cylinders. Jules Levy was perhaps the first performer of his magnitude to record at all, being already a featured attraction in tinfoil phonograph exhibitions at New York's Irving Hall in July 1878.¹ A friend and sometime house-guest of Russian royalty,⁶ by March 1890 his recorded *solo on the piston cornet performed in New York by John (sic) Levy* was part of a phonograph show at St. Petersburg's Theatre Paradise.²

This *séance* staged for Russian hoi-polloi by the European Phonograph Tournée Co. was scathingly reviewed by Edison enthusiast-cum-promoter Julius Block, who on his own was furthering the phonograph's Russian interests with an Edison *spectacle* Class M and at least one cornet cylinder (possibly by John Mittauer.²) The Tournée's Levy cylinder, meanwhile, did get some good press reviews and one can only wonder what became of it.

Here I would offer a tantalising theory: Given Levy's position as darling of the Russian royal family (the Tsarevitch himself was an amateur cornetist) and the consequent advertising value of his name, might not Block, with his own friendship with the Russian royals, have utilised a Levy record?

Levy's first commercial sessions appear to date from circa 1892-93 for the North American Phonograph Co., who listed at least ten selections, Nos. 470 through to 479; gaps in surviving data may hide others.³ One collector glowingly describes 479 *My Sweetheart's the Man in the Moon* as an a cappella solo, adding that Levy, who surely didn't lack for ego, is announced as *the world's greatest cornetist*.

Better known is his first Columbia session of late summer 1896 which produced a dozen cylinders specially numbered A through M, omitting J.⁴ N later would be added.⁵ A special catalogue insert proclaimed his arrival almost hysterically (*The Great and Only Levy*) and offered each record at a thundering two dollars.

In the two I have heard, *Ben Bolt* and his showpiece *Du, Du, Theme and Variations* the announcement repeats the hyperbole: *...by the great and only Jules Levy for the Columbia Phonograph Co. of Washington D.C.* that location appropriate for 1896. Both are accompanied by piano and made of nearly white wax;¹² the performances are superb, if a bit faint.

The June 1897 Columbia catalogue repeats the hyperbolic offer,⁸ again with special insert and numbering, but here arises a question: Are these mechanical dubbings of the 1896 masters which, after

all, had limited life, or products of a later session? Columbia had moved its executive office to New York in January 1897; subsequent announcements reflect this (...of New York City) but I have yet to hear Levy so announced. Of course, it is ignominiously possible that at a stiff \$2 each, these were left overs from slow sales.

The mystery deepens with another collector's discovery of a *Du, Du* on a Columbia cylinder announced simply ...played by *Jules Levy, Columbia Record*. They had changed their announcements with each successive extension, viz., *New York and Paris* (1898-99); *New York and London* (1899-1900); *Columbia Phonograph Co.* (1900-01) and *Columbia Record* (1901 or later). Though these dates are approximate, and overlaps and exceptions exist, recording sessions thus can be dated at least reasonably.

Thus a rather late Levy cylinder session is indicated, perhaps concurrent with his Columbia discs. The cylinder is said to be normal dark brownish with no external markings, hence not moulded. I know of no XP (moulded) Levy listings, even though contemporary catalogues showing his five discs allow columns for both discs and cylinders.¹¹

The simple announcement contracts with some 1901 Victor discs in which he is still the world's greatest cornetist (self-announced!),^{7,8} but not as much as with later Victors which drop the announcement altogether.^{7,8,9}

Only input from readers and other researchers will fill this apparent void in Levy's recording career. It is important if not crucial, for not only do the cylinders represent a younger, hence better artist; they also offer, if in good condition, often better cornet fidelity. Once this data is in hand, a long-overdue compendium of the life of this great performer will be possible, complete with recorded anthology of his later work. That is my goal.

Readers with information on Levy recordings may write to L. E. Andersen, [redacted] Bisbee, Arizona 85603, U.S.A.

References

- 1) *Antique Phonograph Monthly*, Vol. IX, No.2, p. 2
- 2) *Antique Phonograph Monthly* Vol X, No.4, p.4 through 7
- 3) KOENIGSBERG, A.: *Edison Cylinder Records 1889-1912*, p.139
- 4) *Antique Phonograph Monthly*, Vol.II, No.4, p.2
- 5) BRYAN, M. of New Amberola Graphic; letter to author
- 6) BRIDGES, G: *Pioneers in Brass*, p.58
- 7) FAGAN and MORAN: *Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings*, Vol. I
- 8) Author's collection
- 9) FAGAN and MORAN: *Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings* Vol.II
- 10) Moran, W.: letter to author
- 11) 1904-05 British Columbia record catalogue
- 12) Ferguson Collection, Seven Acres Museum and Antique Village, Union, Illinois, U.S.A.

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THE DUPLEX SPEAKER

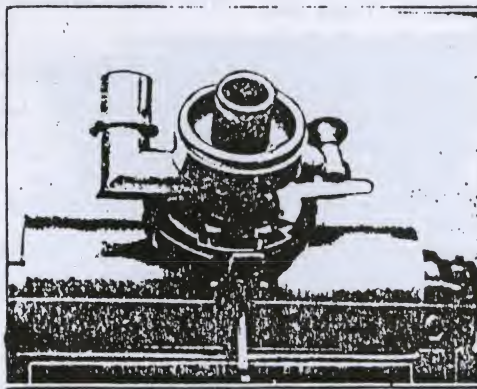
by Ray Phillips, Jr.

A small, rare, and very collectable object from the very early days of the phonograph is the Duplex Speaker. I've seen a very few in my lifetime, but have never owned one. The last one I saw was in the great E.M.I. auction at Christie's South Kensington on September 27, 1980. It was item 271, and fetched £180. Recently I found an article on this piece in the December 1896 issue of *The Phonoscope*, a magazine started in September 1896, with a title apparently contracted from the words *phonograph* and *Kinetoscope*, as it carried articles on both phonographs and early motion pictures. I saw the *Phonoscope* on microfilm at the library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the people who give out the yearly 'Oscars'. The original is in the New York Public Library. It has other similar articles, which I hope to bring to you on occasion, your editor willing! The article and accompanying illustration (I apologise for the poor quality) follow:

The Duplex Speaker

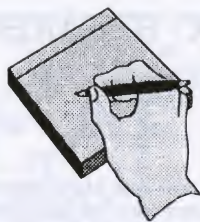
The Edison Phonograph Works are now making a new Speaker, which, when used in the regular way, prevents outside listeners from hearing the reproduction, as the diaphragm or glass set in its upper part is encased so as to retain the sound-vibrations from the lower face of the glass within the enclosure. It has two outlets for sound, one from above and one from below the diaphragm. Enclosing the glass gives the speaker another advantage by enabling it to use the vibrations from the lower side of the diaphragm which now are lost. Thus the tone is considerably strengthened, and the carrying power of the speaker is increased when both outlets are used either with two horns or in connection with the multiple rails. By using but one outlet no increase of tone or power takes place, which, however is very pronounced when both are used, making a reproduction most effective even at a distance.

What may not be entirely clear from this description is that the diaphragm is not down near the cylinder, but in the upper holder, and connected to the stylus by a wire almost an inch long. Its effectiveness must have been overestimated, as it soon disappeared, doomed, probably, by the rapid improvement in the quality of recorded cylinders.



The Edison Duplex Speaker

LETTERS



**Essex,
Butterworth, Castles and Natzke**

Dear Chris,

I would like to comment on three items in the June issue of *Hillandale News*.

Firstly, Peter Cliffe, in his interesting article on Violet Essex, asks for details of her records. He will find them in *London Musical Shows on Record 1897-1976* by Brian Rust and Rex Bunnnett (1977) at pp.409-420. This work should not be confused with *London Musical Shows on Record 1889-1989* by Robert Seeley and Rex Bunnnett (1989) which does not contain discographies of artists.

Secondly, I would like to add to Frank Andrews' note on Clara Butterworth. She appeared in the original London casts of *Young England*, *Lilac Time*, *The Lilac Domino* and *The Rebel Maid* and made records of items from all these shows.

Thirdly, a few corrections to Frank Andrews' item on Amy Castle: the surname is Castles; she was born in 1880 not 1884; she was 18 when she made her first public appearance; the £6000 was raised from several concerts two of which were at the Melbourne Exhibition; the name Bouchy should be Bouhy. I am indebted for this information to Dr Jeff Brownrigg of the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra. He has written a book about Castles which will be published late this year or early next year. He will be pleased to answer any queries and may be contacted by writing to him at NFSA, G.P.O. Box 2002, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia.

Finally I have a query which somebody may be able to answer for me. Oscar Natzke recorded a song called *Wimmen*,

Oh Wimmen. It is credited to Phillips. Is this Montague Phillips? I would be very grateful for information on this point.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Badham, Pymble, N.S.W., Australia

Amy Castles

Dear Christopher,

Re the current issue (June 1993 No.192) of *Hillandale News* and my contribution, part 3 of *More Personalities behind the Names on the Labels* either you or I failed to put the names of the record on which Amy Castles (not Castle) appeared. They were Gramophone Concert record, Gramophone Monarch record and His Master's Voice.

I would like to point out to members that in this continuing occasional series I only follow the careers of the artists covered up to the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, which is why, with reference to Ernie Bayly's letter in *Hillandale News* No.191, I had not mentioned Thorpe Bates as being in the original cast of *Maid of the Mountains*, produced in 1917.

I do, however, mention record labels under which 'my' chosen artists appeared, after 1914, where I know of them.

Yours truly,

Frank Andrews, Neasden, London NW10

[The mis-spelling of Amy Castles' name was caused by a slip of the Editor's fingers for which I apologise. Frank had spelt the name correctly in his original manuscript and I can't let him take the blame for an error he did not make! Ed.]

Violet Essex (1)

Dear Mr Hamilton,

The readers' letters in the latest issue of *Hillandale News* remind me to reply about recordings by Violet Essex.

I will not include her contributions to the HMV acoustic recordings of Gilbert and Sullivan operas, which I have, as I assume they are too well known to list here.

I have however a mint copy of a record, which I found in a bric-a-brac store some twenty five years ago. I assume this is a major rôle in an unsuccessful show. The song is a duet with George Baker:

A Woman's No from *The Lady of the Rose* by Jean Gilbert. The disc is HMV C 1054 (Matrix no. Cc 1177-1). The reverse side is a solo item *Silhouettes*, from the same show, sung by George Baker.

I hope this small contribution may be of some help to Peter Cliffe in his compilation of the recordings of this singer.

Mark Gray, Hyndland, Glasgow

Her first record was made in 1910 for the Encore label (which had two pieces on each side) and her last issued sides were made circa July 1924 for the Columbia label. She made a total of 250 issued sides.

She did record three sides for Columbia in 1928 and two for HMV in 1929 but these were never issued.

I would gladly photocopy the listing, at cost, but I fear I would be breaking copyright.

Your faithfully,

Rick Hardy, Watford

Violet Essex (2)

Dear Sir,

When Peter Cliffe appealed for information to compile a discography of Violet Essex I didn't bother to write to you because I thought you would be deluged with mail about the fact that one already exists!

In Brian Rust's *London Musical Shows on Record 1897-1976* published by General Gramophone Publications Ltd. in 1977 (sadly now out of print after one edition) Rust lists her complete recorded output.

What is it?

Dear Mr Hamilton,

Please find enclosed a photograph of a cabinet recently purchased by my daughter. It is about five feet long, quite well built in a mahogany style and the right-hand side was definitely once a gramophone. The left-hand side has an identical external appearance and seems to have been a drinks cabinet with a tray for glasses beneath the lid. Is it possible that any fellow member, through the medium of *Hillandale News*, may be able to cast any light on the origins of this large piece of



Peter Heath's daughter's sideboard

furniture? While it is certainly of commercial manufacture there is no identifying label or tag.

Regards,

Peter Heath, Spondon, Derby

Edouard Léon Scott de Martinville

Dear Editor,

I beg to call attention to the glaring misstatement of contributor Joe Pengelly in his June piece on Theodore Edison wherein Mr Pengelly states that Edison "had invented sound recording". To quote Frank Andrews' words to me and Ernie Bayly some years ago, "Thomas Edison invented sound reproduction, not sound recording." Surely Mr Pengelly is aware that Edouard Léon Scott de Martinville invented sound recording in 1856, more than a score of years before Edison devised a way to play records as well as adopting Scott's word, phonautograph, while removing the letters a-u-t. Sadly - for Edison - he failed to copy Scott's lateral cut format.

Sincerely,

Oliver Berliner, Beverly Hills, California, U.S.A.

{Readers should refer to George Taylor's article on Léon Scott and his phonautograph in this issue. Ed}

Hines Gramophone

Dear Editor,

I have just acquired a most interesting gramophone and wonder if any member would be able to give me any information on it, or the company which manufactured it. The machine is a Hines made by the Scottish Gramophone Manufacturing Co. Ltd. of Glasgow. It is a table-top model in solid mahogany. It features a volume control knob which operates a butterfly valve in the throat of the cast iron horn. This is to the right of the centrally mounted tone arm which carries what appears to be an Exhibition soundbox (or an exact copy of one). To the left of the tone arm is a

lever to select either talking/songs, orchestra and solo instruments or brass bands. This lever has little or no effect upon the reproduction however! I have not yet stripped the machine to find out how this should work, if at all.

The machine also has a battery-operated light so that you can see where to place the needle upon the record. The original battery was still in place when I purchased the machine and appears to be of Hines manufacture (as does the motor) bearing a paper label to that effect.

The machine appears to be of very high quality and would have been expensive to make and so I would be intrigued to find out more.

Many thanks,

Stephen Loukes, Harrogate, North Yorkshire

{I would refer Stephen to my article on Hines and The Scottish Gramophone Manufacturing Co. Ltd. in *Hillandale News* No.150, June 1986. Ed.}

HMV Pick-ups

Dear Chris,

Anent David Riches' letter in the August issue of *Hillandale News*, the HMV No.11 pick-up was preceded by ten earlier pick-ups **and soundboxes**. No.1, was retrospectively, the Exhibition, Nos. 2 to 5 we know as soundboxes, and the reason for the jump from the 1928 '5a' to the 1931 '16' is that there were many pick-ups, mostly experimental, in that period of development.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Proudfoot, Dartford, Kent

Typing errors

Dear Chris,

A very common error, when using a typewriter without a figure 1, is to use instead a capital 'I'. The remedy is easy. Use a lower case 'L' instead, then all will be well.

This common error is only equalled by the number of people who write of Kreisler's *Liebeslied*, when they should write *Liebesleid*.

Yours sincerely,

Ken Loughland, Maidenhead, Berks.

[Glad to hear from you Ken and glad also that you are recovering from your stroke of four years ago. I hope that we shall see you at some of the London meetings soon. Ed.]

Survivors from the acoustic age

Dear Chris,

The correspondence on survivors from the acoustic age is most interesting, and I wonder if I might add some names to the list?

Sylvester Ahola, born in Gloucester, Massachusetts in 1902, recorded acoustically for Lincoln, Edison, and Pathé between 1924 and 1927, contributing hot trumpet solos that were at one time credited to Ward Pinkett, among others; and band-leader Bert Firman, born in London in 1906, began his recording career at eighteen as leader and director of the Zonophone house band in 1924. I may be wrong in the following examples, but I believe Norah Blaney, who recorded for HMV and Columbia between 1915 and 1925, is still alive in her nineties, and so I think is Marjorie Gordon, who starred with Evelyn Laye in *Going Up!* and recorded with her and other members of the cast for HMV in 1918. Isn't Dorothy Dickson still with us? She recorded her songs from *Sally* for Columbia in 1921.

Another artist who recorded acoustically, but is still alive, is Goldkette trombonist Spiggle Willcox, who is 89 and recorded for Victor with the Collegians in 1923, when he was nineteen (and a fine straight trombonist he was, and incredibly still is - he made an LP only a year or two ago). I believe Paul Whiteman violinist Kurt Dietlerle is still with us, and he recorded with Whiteman in 1924. Any more additions I wonder?

Incidentally, Shura Cherkassky was twelve when he made his Victor records (on October 31, 1923); I found one of them and showed it to him many years later. He was amazed and amused: "Where on earth did you find that?" he said, adding with a grin, "Of course, I was a bit younger then."

My best,

Brian Rust, Swanage, Dorset.

Una Bourne

Dear Chris,

I read somewhere that Una Bourne was born on 23rd October 1883 in New South Wales, Australia and died there on 15th November 1974. She was an infant prodigy.

Yours sincerely,

J. A. Turner, Chorley, Lancashire

[Can anyone confirm these dates? Ed.]

HMV C 1329 (04919)

Dear Mr Hamilton,

I wonder if any members could help me solve a problem that I have had for some time regarding the famous HMV recording *Hear My Prayer* by Ernest Lough, the Choir of The Temple Church, London and George Thalben Ball, organ. This recording was made in 1927 and I believe it was, if not the **first**, one of the earliest outside electrical recordings made by The Gramophone Company Ltd.

My interest in this record was again aroused as I read, with enthusiasm, my new copy of *Hayes on Record* reviewed in the August issue of *Hillandale News*.

I can thoroughly recommend this book as it contains a huge amount of information on the production processes involved in the manufacture of discs which would be hard to find elsewhere.

In chapter 1, the authors provide a useful de-code table so that the serial number of

a particular stamper can be identified from a letter code moulded onto the record material just outside the label area.

As I have ten copies of this record (catalogue number C 1329, matrix number CR 1020 for side A and CR 1021 for side B), I decided to investigate the range of stamper numbers contained in my own small sample.

The numbers for side A range from 8 to 575 and for side B from 11 to 427. As stampers would, I presume, only be changed as a result of wear due to large production runs, I would have expected the stamper numbers for both sides of any record to be in close agreement as wear would be about equal for both the top and bottom stampers.

This is not so, as the difference between stamper numbers is anything from 3 to 151. Can anyone suggest a reason for this and indicate how many copies of a record could typically be produced from one stamper?

There is another puzzle concerning this record. Of the ten copies examined, six of them have a large label typical of other HMV 12" recordings of about the same issue date, the remaining four copies have smaller labels, typical of records issued many years later than 1927. The programme material on both discs is identical (as far as I can detect by careful listening) but despite all the discs having the same matrix number they are definitely **not** manufactured from the same matrix. This is evidenced by the fact that the diameter of the last groove before run-out of side A on the large labelled discs is 121mm and that on the small labelled discs is 114mm.

This proves that a different matrix was used, certainly as far as side A is concerned, for each of the two disc types. Why and how was this different matrix produced? More importantly, why was it given the same matrix number as the original recording?

The 'master' metalwork created by electroplating the original wax cut should have

been the best available for producing further metal positives if these were damaged or worn by producing a large number of stampers. Further stampers could have been produced from these positives, the matrix and its number still being 'original'.

If, unfortunately, the 'master' metalwork was also damaged a new 'wax' could have been made by playing and re-recording a virgin shellac pressing taken during the first production batch from the presses. Some reduction in quality of any subsequent pressings would have been inevitable. The new matrix would not be an original and should have been given a new number.

If the scroll speed of the recording lathe used to cut the 'new' wax were not identical to the original scroll speed, then one could expect a difference in recorded groove traverse length, relative to the original recording. Run-in and run-out grooves could also differ in detail. There is no run-in groove on either type of disc and the run-out grooves look the same.

There is however one other explanation for having two different matrices of the same performance, and that is that two disc recording machines were used at the same time to produce two wax cuts. The two machines would not necessarily be identical and would produce two musically identical but mechanically different recordings.

I therefore suggest that either of the explanations above could apply but that neither would explain why the same matrix number was used for a 'different' recording, either a nearly identical copy of the original performance, or a parallel recording of the original performance.

I would appreciate any information that other members or readers could provide concerning this puzzle as I really would like to know the correct answer.

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm George, Manuden, Herts.

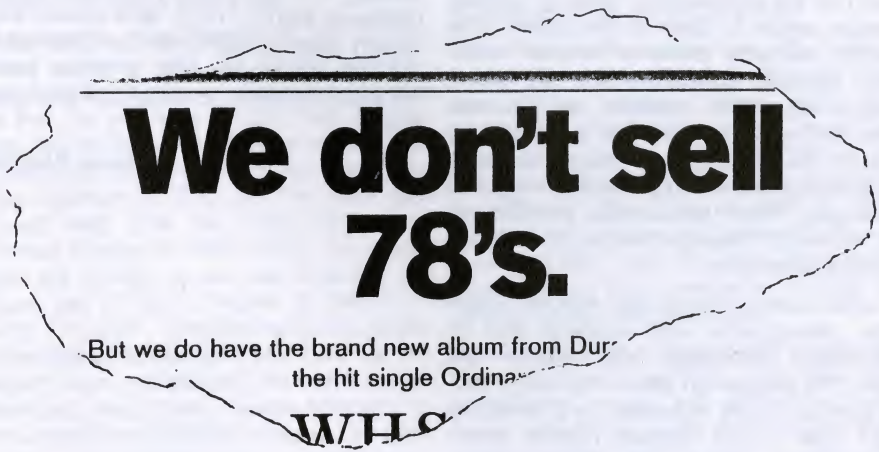
PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS

by George Frow

As holiday reading recently I took a copy of *Maundy Gregory, The Purveyor of Honours* by Tom Cullen (The Bodley Head 1974). Whereas Gregory was notorious in his time as an intermediary who would arrange a barony, baronetcy or a knighthood for a substantial contribution towards a political fund, and later when restrictions tightened around him transferring his abilities to Catholic knighthoods and orders, there were three things outside these matters that followers of the gramophone might like to know about; well, perhaps for just as long as it takes to read.

At some time before 1914 Gregory shared Abbey Lodge, St. John's Wood with Frederick and Edith Rosse. This continued into the 1920s when Frederick Rosse had departed and Gregory and Edith lived in the house - he had the upper floor and Edith the ground. Soon after they left Abbey Lodge was converted into E.M.I.'s recording studio. Edith Rosse had been a minor actress and toured in *The Quaker Girl* and *The Arcadians*, but her husband who by now had given her up may be remembered as the composer of *Monsieur Beaucaire* and *The Merchant of Venice Suite*; the Doge's March from this is still heard. The wife Edith died later in suspicious circumstances, but there was not sufficient evidence to convict Maundy Gregory.

It is a fascinating story of an evil man and this journal is hardly the place to recount it more widely. Followers of dance records made by Ray Starita may know he was one of those who played at the Ambassadors Club in London; this was owned by Gregory from the mid-twenties until shortly before the last war when he was 'seen off' to France by acquaintances who subscribed to a fund to enable him to stay, and he died in internment there in 1941.



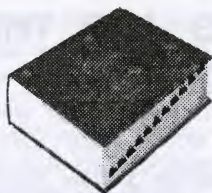
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REVIEWS



***Hand-cranked Phonographs* by Neil Maken, Promar Publishing (USA)**

Neil Maken, the California dealer-collector, has written an 87-page paperback of simple hard-wearing design which he subtitled *An Introduction to Vintage Talking Machines*. It is ideal for the complete beginner, though not exclusively so.

The first chapter *It all started with Edison* gives the early history of the talking machine. Later in the book, there is a simple scientific explanation of recording, illustrating the difference between vertical and lateral cutting. It is a useful new idea to offer a dating guide to machines in graph form - though this one is very approximate.

Edison phonographs are covered in a detailed chapter, with useful discussion of how to understand aids to identification such as the reproducer or gearing. Considerable space is given to the latter - the author obviously aware of novices' confusion between two-minute and four-minute adjustments. The chapters on Columbia and Berliner/Victor machines are also very helpful for identification, though obviously written from the American point of view; two European "firsts" are omitted, the K  mmer & Reinhardt Gramophone and the Odeon double-sided discs.

Further useful chapters deal with the Edison disc phonographs and language and instructional recordings, both cylinder and disc. The chapter on coin-in-the-slot phonographs is greatly enlivened by a transcription from a Cal Stewart ("Uncle Josh") monologue about the "Funnygraph".

Though well-informed on the coin-operated Edison and Columbia cylinder machines, this chapter omits coin-operated gramophones. I was glad to find details of the machines from O'Neill James and others which were marketed under names such as "Busy Bee", "Aretino" and, ironically "Standard" - when they were non-standard, having special mandrels or spindles to accept only their own records.

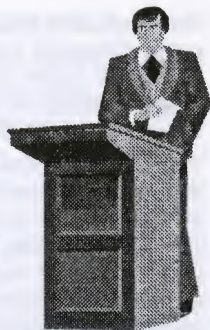
Records (both kinds), reproducers/sound-boxes and even horns are also discussed at length, with clues as to identification and dating. George Frow has supplied some fascinating historical research by which we can compare talking machines' prices in 1900 with those of modern hi-fi equipment. A chapter on "Nipper" brings the terrier's history up to date. A question-and-answer section, glossary and trouble-shooting guide conclude the book.

This is a concise reference for those with a machine or disc collection, whether starting out or experienced. It is written in a lively style, and Neil Maken's energy and enthusiasm for his subject are obvious.

This book is available from **Promar Publishing**, P.O. Box 6554, Huntington Beach, California 92615, U.S.A. at a special introductory price of **US\$12.95** plus **US\$1.85** for U.K. (Surface mail). After a limited period the price increases to **US\$15.95** plus postage.

Benet Bergonzi

REPORTS



London Meeting, May 20th 1993

Maybe out of character or possibly naturally in sympathy, our May presenter, Peter Adamson, in his programme entitled *Feline Groovy* brought a full two hours of feline fun to Exhibition Road.

If the imitation of our oldest domestic companion is considered flattery, Pussy has appeared since the dawn of recording, in *Cat Quarrel* by Carsdale on an 1899 Berliner. We threaded through pussies in children's nursery rhymes; cats in titles like *Cat Serenade* on Homophone 6501 or obviously *Mee-ow!* on HMV C 962. By the time *Kitten on the Keys* on HMV B 1385 had been played the first batch of slides had shown illustrations of our friend with human artists - although Emmy Destinn cheated by posing with a lion!

Conveniently this brought us on to the larger moggies who are usually encountered in zoos; so the imitations like *Sunrise at the Zoo* on Regal G 6541 and *Visit to the Zoo* on Winner 2616 were anticipated. Lions also appeared in music titles like Liza Lehmann's *They say the Lion and Lizard keep* from her song cycle *In a Persian Garden* on HMV 04172. Some big cats are foreign so we had *Chanson du Tigre*, part of Paul et Virginie by Massé on Victor 15-1008. Understanding the brute instructively, Moran and Mack tell us *All about Lions* on Columbia 4616. We had a chance to hear a rare George Robey on a 12" Zonophone X-042000 entitled *The Lion Tamer*. Unfortunately even cyclists come to a culinary end as heard in *La Course Interrompue* from the book *Ruthless Rhymes* on HMV C 3464.

Whilst the above batch of lion records were

being played the slides of the many cats and lions which appeared on (or should I say adorned) needle tins, record labels and sleeves quite exhausted the Kodak Carousel projector necessitating a break for re-loading the cartridge!

Once electrical recording and portable recorders were able to be taken into the bush intrepid engineers made straight for the zoo! Julian Huxley toured one on Durium Records entitled *Zoo Voices*, whilst on Gennett 1038 we heard African lions, and pumas fighting.

The popular tune *Tiger Rag* by Nick la Rocca had several interpretations. We heard some of them played on a Hammond organ on Black and White 3000; by Paul Whiteman on Columbia CB 163 and on 6 pianos on Regal-Zonophone MR 1277. During this selection tigers illustrated on sales literature were shown together with a bizarre picture of a tiger hunt on a 1920 picture disc.

Finally we had some fun! Leslie Sarony on Oliver 3005 sang *Don't do that to the Poor Puss Cat* and again on Imperial 2361 he sang *Hunting Tigers in India*. Florrie Forde on Edison Bell Radio sang *What Happened to the Manx Cat's Tail?*

Peter finished his programme with a selection of authors reading extracts from their own works. Vachel Lindsay read *The Mysterious Cat* from a private recording circa 1928 on the National Council of Teachers label. Clifford Turner read William Blake's *The Tyger* on HMV B 3151 and A. E. W. Mason on Dominion B 6 read from *No Other Tiger*. For these recordings illustrations of lions rampant on records in various modes filled the screen.

In all, 133 feline pictures were shown by Peter during the evening. This made his programme a very full, informative and highly entertaining event. This original and unique subject gave us 47 musical (?) excerpts and we must thank Peter for such diligent research into the world of cats and we look forward to the next animated subject.

G.W.

London Meeting, June 17th 1993

In his aptly titled programme *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about the National Sound Archive, But Were Afraid to Ask* the presenter, Benet Bergonzi (the Curator of Artifacts at the National Sound Archive) immediately unnerved his audience by exposing them to sounds of 1993 and then travelling backwards in time. The 1930s were recognisable and your reporter was in his element hearing Berliners and wax cylinders. Bennet, after crediting the artists on these recordings, opened the doors of the inner sanctum to expose the many facets of the Sound Archive activities.

He commenced with the sounds made by us humans both vocal and instrumental and made in all classifications and cultures and performed or recorded secretly in studios or on location.

Next came the collection of sounds made by mammals, insects and reptiles, all clamouring for attention and immortality before they become extinct.

Benet then went on to explain the use of specially adapted video recorders for copying commercial broadcasts and for interviewing elderly or distinguished members of the public.

Another side of the National Sound Archive's activities is the acquisition of discs, tapes, CDs and videos (mostly voluntary donations from the leading record companies). All these are entered into a computer catalogue to allow easy access in the future. These donations along with several from the public have ensured that this is a major task.

Access by the public to the record collection has to be limited to listening to the recordings in booths or on headphones. Landlines connect the various buildings of the NSA together, but some delay in accessing recordings is inevitable.

The NSA has its own recording studio. It purchased George Frow's collection of

machines and has several of these on public display in their premises in Exhibition Road. There is also a large library of books, magazines, printed ephemera and of printed material on microfilm.

The NSA, being part of the British Library, is funded from the general grant made by the government to the British Library, and it is not surprising that considerable juggling of finances may have to be exercised to provide resources for undertakings such as the recent transcription of the alleged cylinder of Queen Victoria's voice, owned by the Science Museum. Important research sometimes has to be suspended until resources are available.

At the conclusion of this most interesting talk, Benet answered questions from the floor ranging from the linking of other similar organisations to the NSA by computer to the viability of Digital Audio Tape as a long-time storage medium.

This was an extremely successful evening impressing all the listeners in the complexity of the subject and revealing many facets of the NSA's activities.

G.W.

**Midlands Group Record Fair,
Saturday 29th June 1993 at
Methodist Community Hall,
Ablewell Street, Walsall**

This was the third fair staged by our Group at this venue. There were about the same number of stall holders as last year but the numbers who attended were reduced compared with last year.

However a useful sum was raised for our Group's funds and this has encouraged us to run another fair next year. It will probably be earlier in the year, as we felt mid-summer is not the best time for attracting potential customers.

The refreshments were excellent and an added bonus this year was the piano playing of Guy Rowland of the Mayerl-Gershwin Society (who had a stall) and the solo trumpet of Pete March (formerly of the New Arcadians Dance Orchestra). We also manned a C.L.P.G.S. book stall.

We hope still more members will support this venture next year when we hope to have an ever wider range of machines and records for sale than this year.

Geoff Howl

**Midlands Group Meeting,
Saturday 17th June 1993 at The
Methodist Community Hall,
Ablewell Street, Walsall.**

There was a good attendance for the Annual Musical Quiz presented by Geoff Howl and Wal Fowler and they did their best to answer all the questions posed by Geoff and Wal!

The quiz was conducted along the same lines as previous ones, with questions on most styles of music such as names of operas, music hall artists, tune titles and a couple of instances where the audience was asked to guess the 'odd one out' of three extracts of music.

Most members got at least a few right and nobody was seen to rip up their answers in disgust!

Geoff Howl

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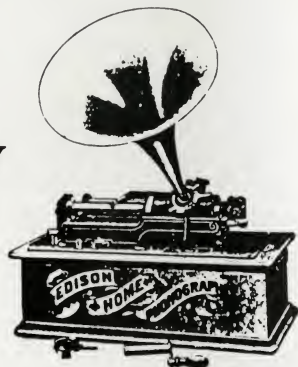
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C.L.P.G.S. MIDLANDS GROUP

The First Twenty-Five Years!

Part Two: 1981 to Now and the Future

by Mark Morgan

The Midlands Area Group was still growing in strength in 1981, as it had continued to be since its formation (the result of efforts by Phil Bennett) on 20th January 1968 at The Giffard's Arms public house in Wolverhampton.

At the 1982 AGM on 16th January at Gosta Green Arts Centre the committee consisting of Eddie Dunn (Chairman), Gerry Burton (Secretary), Roger Preston (Treasurer) and Geoff Howl were re-elected. After the business part of the meeting Mrs Ruth Lambert gave us a talk on needle tins (naturally!) and Gerry Burton gave a presentation of slides of the 1977 displays organised by the Midlands Group at the Museum for Science and Industry, Birmingham.

The two consecutive meetings in March and May featured a talk by Mr Wal Fowler and the annual quiz by Geoff and Ray Howl.

Phil Bennett gave a talk at the next meeting in July on Jazz. The Group's funds had increased during the year from £52.39 to £115.36 by September, much boosted by a Midlands Group Phonofair which was an established annual event. These Phonofairs were at this time held at Churchbridge Teachers Centre, Oldbury.

This was repeated in 1983, together with a talk by Group members at the Birmingham and Midlands Institute on the 20th June. The Group were also invited to give a lecture, which turned out to be very successful, at Aston University, Birmingham on 11th October 1983 as part of a University feature on the *Development of the Talking*

Machine up to the Compact Disc. Ruth Lambert again visited us for the October meeting.

The Midlands Group also hosted the 1984 National Phonofair which resulted in Roger Preston and Ray Howl (both from our Group) receiving awards for the best Phonograph and Gramophone. Phil Bennett had given the second of two out-of-character programmes, one entitled *Not Jazz* and the other *Jazz not on 78s*.

By the end of 1984 (boosted by the National Phonofair) the Group's funds had risen to £307.16.

1985 found the Midlands Group busy once again. The organisers at the Dudley Show, held annually at Himley Hall (near Dudley) had expressed interest in an exhibition by the Group. There was also an exhibition given by the brothers Howl at the Midland Centre for Neurosurgery, Smethwick.

Several members held a Bank Holiday weekend display at the Black Country Museum, Tipton, Dudley. To co-ordinate these events a sub-committee consisting of the Secretary, Treasurer, Phil Bennett, Geoff Howl and Ray Howl was formed.

Fred Perks, a long-time member of the Group (who together with his brother Alf have restored many machines for collectors thus saving many from the scrap heap), was duly awarded the prize for the Best Gramophone Award in 1985. This was not the first time Fred had won recognition for the quality of his machines. Fred along with his brother Alf, Eddie Dunn and Richard

Taylor provide major part of the machinery for the Midland group exhibitions.

As a result of comments made by Fred Perks during 1986 about the poor quality of products from certain suppliers the Group drew up a list of recommended suppliers of accessories and spare parts.

The Group held its annual Phonofair but declined an invitation to take part in the Dudley Show at Himley Hall because of a clash with a radiophonic display.

1987 started on a very sad note. It was the unwelcome duty of the Chairman of our Group, Eddie Dunn, to report the death of Ray Howl, who had taken ill over the Christmas period. The minutes recorded by the Secretary, Gerry Burton, state "Every-one who had been associated with Ray will miss the gentleman he was, glowing tributes were spoken by Eddie Dunn, who like us all, found it difficult to find words to cover such a sad loss." Ray had, during his years with the Group been a driving force behind many of the Group's activities and had devoted much of his spare time to help the Group including the many special events. A letter had been received from the Society's President, George Frow, who stated his intention to include his own personal tribute on behalf of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society in the Society's journal *Hillandale News*.

Satisfactory new arrangements had been made to enable the Group to participate in the 1987 Dudley Show at Himley Hall during the first weekend in August. Exhibits included Ray Howl's 'Trademark Model' gramophone, kindly loaned by his widow, Pat. As usual many members contributed machines and accessories.

From the meeting on 19th October the venue reverted to Room G17 at Aston University.

1988 was the twentieth anniversary of the Group and the average attendance at our meetings was between twenty and twenty-

-five people. Les Penn made one of his regular appeals to organise a special recruiting drive for new members even though the various public events organised by the Group were usually successful in this respect.

Aston University had found it necessary to increase the charges for room hire at short notice with the result that we had to hold an extraordinary general meeting before the regular meeting on March 19th to pass a resolution to increase the minimum levy to meet this charge.

1988 talks included one by Eddie Dunn and Phil Bennett on cylinder recordings. The 1988 Annual Quiz was presented by Geoff Howl and Wal Fowler.

A balance of £410.25 in the Group's funds was reported at the 1989 AGM on 21st January. The Phonofair and Dudley Show events took place and were and maintained their customary success.

Unfortunately Gerry Burton fell ill and was unable to stand for re-election at the 1990 AGM. After much arm-twisting Phil Bennett was persuaded to stand again as Secretary and was duly elected at the AGM on 20th January 1990 at Aston University. Eddie Dunn (Chairman), Roger Preston (Treasurer) and Geoff Howl Committee member and Reporter) were re-elected.

The Group was faced with a major crisis that winter as Aston University once again increased their charges. This time the Group were unable to afford them and the hunt for a new meeting venue was begun in earnest. It took some considerable time to find other premises and it was not until 28th July that were able to hold another meeting. This was held at Carrs Lane Methodist Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham. This met our budget constraints and was convenient to get to for those who had to rely on public transport. The Group still meet there today. We also changed our banking arrangements.

The November 17th meeting was a joint one held with the Severn Vale Group. The meeting was saddened to hear from Mrs Jarrett of the death of her husband Jack, who had been a long-standing stalwart of the Group. He would be much missed.

In spite of the difficulties in finding a new meeting venue we were still able to participate in the Dudley Show at Himley Hall and other events.

1991 turned out to be a much better year. A letter had arrived from Peter Martland, the Chairman of C.L.P.G.S., inviting the Midland Group to nominate one of the Group to serve on the C.L.P.G.S. Committee. Eddie Dunn was elected to fulfil this rôle. We had our usual six regular meetings including the Annual Quiz by Geoff Howl and Wal Fowler, a cylinder evening from Eddie Dunn and *Around the World in 20 Discs* by Wal Fowler.

We decided to devote a significant proportion of our display at the Dudley Show to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the death of Thomas A. Edison. This again proved to be a successful event for us.

1992 proved to be another successful year attracting several new adherents.. We promoted a record fair at Walsall for the second year running. Wal Fowler, who had been co-opted onto our committee during the past year along with Geoff Howl, were largely responsible for this. There had been an increase of our supporters who sold records and talking machines, on either a full-time basis or a part-time basis.

It was through his association with Geoff Howl at his shop "The Music Room" in Walsall that the author was introduced to the Society and the Group.

We again participated in the Dudley Show and the regular meetings had programmes given by: Phil Bennett and Richard Taylor on jazz-related subjects; by Geoff Howl on a *First Record Evening*, by Gerry Lee on male

operatic singers; by Wal Fowler on comedy (both intentional and unintentional) and by Mark Morgan on the Savoy Bands.

At the 1993 AGM all the officers were re-elected and a new constitution was approved. Geoff Howl was appointed Deputy Chairman and Richard Taylor was elected to the committee. The Midland Group now had two members on the C.L.P.G.S. Committee: Richard Taylor (elected in his own right) and Eddie Dunn (the Midlands Group appointed member). In addition the C.L.P.G.S. AGM had elected Eddie Vice-Chairman responsible for the regions.

The Midlands Group looks set to enjoy a prosperous future. Its membership continues to increase and it will run some special events in 1993 including a Phonofair and hosting the AGM of C.L.P.G.S. on 25th September. (See separate advertisement.)

Phil Bennett reflects that the future of this and any other society depends on it attracting new (and in particular younger) members. The Midlands Group are quite successful in this respect as there several members in the younger age group (the author being one).

Midlands Group Meetings are held on the **third Saturday** in the month in **January, March, May, July, September** and **November**. Visitors are most welcome to these meetings which are held at The Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham (just off the High Street, about 4 minutes walk from Birmingham New Street Railway Station). Car parking facilities are available free, on site.

The Group possesses a considerable wide variety of expertise, ranging from operatic, where Jerry Lee specialises in John McCormack and Eddie Dunn on Caruso, through dance bands and music hall - an area well-known by Geoff Howl. Phil Bennett and Richard Taylor are our resident jazz ex-

perts. The author is an enthusiast for mediaeval and renaissance music.

Fred Perks and his brother Alf are the repair and restoration experts. They have lovingly rebuilt many machines, even manufacturing parts when replacements were not available. Alf specialised in restoring cabinets and many regained their pristine condition under his loving care. Many of our group were grateful to have been helped by their expertise. Without their dedication many machines would be no more than silent ornaments.

It is timely to pay Phil Bennett a debt of gratitude for without his pioneering efforts in 1968 there would have been no Midlands Group. We can confidently look forward to expanding well into the twenty-first century.